



#### CLAY GEERDES COMIX WAVE 137

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George Metzger, Pat Ryan, David Sheridan, Bobby London, Gary Hallgren, Larry Todd, and numerous other cartoonists were doing their own versions of the subculture in the early seventies. Holmes is extremely versatile and his funny animal work in **FOG CITY** is the equal of any major cartoonist. His most recent work has appeared in the **GRATEFUL DEAD** comics published by Denis Kitchen.

If you want to know about cartooning, ask a cartoonist. If you want to know about history, you have to ask an historian. The cartoonist knows about his own work, but the historian keeps better records. In the early issues of my **COMIX WORLD NEWSLETTER**, I often took the cartoonists for granted. I assumed they knew the facts and I wrote them down as they were told to me. But not for long. I soon learned I had to check everything or look like a fool in print. I met artists like Roger Brand and Kim and Simon Deitch who were collectors and had a strong sense of history, but I met others like Greg Irons who did not. All had selective interests and few were interested in the entire spectrum of comic art. -CLAY GEERDES 4/8/93

#### COMIX STARS ON PARADE

The major comic companies have adopted the techniques of the movie studios these days. They cultivate and develop comixstar artists to the point of making them cultic. This system recently backfired when a number of artists left the majors and formed their own company, taking their fans with them. When Todd McFarland was signing **SPAWNS** at Wonder Con, fans had to take a number and wait in a line longer than that for Disneyland's Matterhorn. The wait was well over an hour for one autograph on the cover of one book. A costumed Spawn strolled around the dealer's room and posed next to the Spawnmobile parked next to the line.

The latest from Steve Lafler, **PROMETHEUS' GIFT** on the inside cover of which you can read all about one of Steve's mushroom trips. \$3.50 pp from Box 576, Hudson, MA 01749. **BUZZARD 7** is \$4.50 pp. Same address. A new Dog boy story. Steve will publish a collection of Bob Crabb's stuff later this year. Look for **CRABBS**.

**Cerebus 168** continues Dave Sim's *Mothers and Daughters* series. Nice jam by Sim and Brad Foster on the inside back cover. The drawing is being sold to benefit the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

**CITY LIMITS GAZETTE** continues to plug a lot of small press stuff. \$15 a year from Steve Willis, POB 390. McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

#### THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Bill Griffith was interviewed by Gary Groth in **The Comics Journal** 157 and the creator of Zippy was as opinionated as usual. Bill's memory is no better than anyone else's, however, and, in the interest of historical accuracy, Groth should have had someone check his facts before printing the piece. Bill's recall of the history of The Print Mint is quite shaky. Don [not Al] Schenkor and Alice Schenkor went into the poster business at a counter inside Moe's Bookstore and it was Alice, with her expertise in importing European prints and posters to sell to students, who was responsible for the survival of the business as it is today. While Bob and Peggy Rita worked with the Schenkors in the printing operation, it was Peggy Rita who did most of the bookkeeping. A lot of the books Griffith attributes to The Print Mint were published by other companies and only distributed by PM.

**Middle Class Fantasies** was Jerry Lane's graduate thesis at Fresno State College and when he came to the Bay Area he knew Ron Turner as an alumnus of FSC so he looked him up. Ron told him that Griffith and Kim Deitch needed another book for their initial run at the Cartoonists Co-op Press, so Jerry took it there. The second issue was not published by the Print Mint. Keith Green did it himself in October of 1976. The first edition has no logo or price on the cover. During this time the extant underground companies traded cases of comix and sold one another's books. **Short Order Comix 1** was published by Head Press in Aspen, Colorado in 1973, not by The Print Mint. #2 was published in New York by a shortlived outfit called Family Fun.

Denis Kitchen did **Mom's Homemade Comics** [not Mom's Apple Pie] in 1969 and Print Mint asked to reprint **Mom's 1**. Denis said okay, but was unsatisfied with the way the book was handled. When the copies did not sell for him through The Print Mint he decided to return to his home in Wisconsin where he formed Krupp Comic Works and published his own work through Kitchen Sink Enterprises. The reader is referred to his article in Jay Kennedy's *The Underground and Newwave Price Guide*

[1983], p. 21 ff. At Wonder Con on April 2, 1993, in Oakland, California, I learned that Denis Kitchen would be moving to Massachusetts to take over Tundra which means there will be changes taking place at both Krupp and Tundra in the coming year.

Re **COMIX BOOK**, I fail to see how **COMIX BOOK** could be a "watered down version of **ARCADE**" when **COMIX BOOK 1** came out in October of 1974 and **ARCADE 1** was not printed until late Spring of 1975. **ARCADE** reflected the interests of Bill Griffith, Artie Spiegelman and their circle of friends and **COMIX BOOK** reflected the interests of Denis Kitchen and his friends. I think it's a matter of different strokes. The eclectic art in both publications predicted their rapid demise in a world dominated by Peanuts and Mickey Mouse.

Bill refers to Belier Press as an underground publisher, but it was not. Never published a single underground comic book. The press, run by Jeff Rund, reprinted bondage art from the late thirties and early forties, mainly the work of John Willie and Eric Stanton. Rund is responsible for the revival of interest in Betty Page since he published two magazines which reprinted Betty's fifties cheesecake photographs. His books were on sale at the San Diego Comic Convention where Dave Stevens saw them and shortly thereafter Betty showed up as a character in Stevens' *Rocketeer*.

It's clear that Griffith did not like Rand Holmes, but the curt dismissal of a fine artist of Holmes' stature by both Griffith and Groth as an "E-C spin-off guy" and "a cross between Wally Wood and the Freak Brothers" is uncalled for. Rand Holmes did live in the Bay Area for awhile in 1974, but he decided to return to Canada with his friend, Mary. Holmes is a superb artist, one who did not have the advantage [or disadvantage] of an established art school. He taught himself to draw by redrawing Wally Wood's science fiction stories. He got into the underground scene through the editor of the **Georgia Straight** who asked him to draw a hippy comic strip. Holmes came up with Harold Hedd. He and Shelton were not the only cartoonists doing stories about hippy characters and cats in those days.

## AT WONDER CON

Though the Bay Area was the major locale for Underground comix in the seventies, their participation in conventions has dwindled to a couple of tables. **Ron Turner of Last Gasp** had only one table this year. He said he had gotten some of the **WEIRDOS** back into print and would publish **WEIRDO 28** later this year. Ron's latest is a collection called **GO NAKED** which features art by Charles Burns, Matt Groening, Kaz, & numerous others. It's about \$10 by mail and you'll get Ron's latest catalog. POB 410067, San Francisco, CA 94141-0067. I saw a copy of **BLAB 7** At Dan Clowes table [he did the cover], but have not have a chance to look at the contents yet. It's listed in **Kitchen Sink's Spring Catalog** which you can get from #2 Swamp Road, Princeton, WI 54968. Kellie Strom and Stephen Walsh's **ACID BATH** looks impressive. So does Burns' all color **BLOOD CLUB**. Kitchen now has Cherry Poptart and I got a copy of the 2nd **Cherries Jubilee** from Larry Welz. A model was on hand to play the role of Cherry and pass out pins. There was a Cherry Poptart lookalike contest held one evening but I was not there to see it. Among the judges was Dan O'Neill whose current comic strip runs in the weekly **BAY GUARDIAN**. A couple of Dan's panels are in the new issue of the second series of the **ARGONAUT**. Crumb has a drawing in there along with an article about Robert Williams paintings. Last Gasp handles the book. Say \$13 pp. It's about an inch thick. Lots of reading. There is even a two page article by Ron Turner.

**Networker.** If you want to contact Mike Friedrich or Lee Marrs at **Star\*Reach Productions**, they have Suite 202, 2991 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705.

I bought a **Doonesbury** yoyo and it works just as well as my old Duncan. If you're interested in any of the **Doonesbury** stuff, write to 10 Liberty Ship Way, Suite #147, Sausalito, CA 94965. When I first saw that stuff in **SPY**, I thought it was a put on like **SNL**'s dog sex ad-mocking Calvin Klein, but, nope, all that **Doonesbury** stuff exists from t-shirts and pins to sew-on patches and a Mr. Butts ashtray.

**Arn Saba** is working on a musical production featuring **Neil the horse**. It is currently scheduled by Theater on the Square in downtown San Francisco for December of 1993.

People interested in **Pogo** originals by Walt Kelly might contact **Mark Burstein**, 341 Lovell Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941. Mark had some beautiful strips and panels on display at Wonder Con. \$700-\$1000.

A moment of silence was observed at the Con in memory of **Harvey Kurtzman**. A show of Kurtzman's art will be mounted at the **Cartoon Art Museum** in San Francisco later this year.

## COMIX CONTACTS

Saulius Krusna  
Persekininku K.  
4589 Parecenu, P. O.  
Alytaus Raj.  
Lithuania

Norman Dog, who does a single panel gag for the East Bay **EXPRESS**, our local ad throwaway, has been attacked for using negative racial stereotypes in some of his weekly cartoons. A slant-eyed, buck-toothed Japanese character caused a ton of letters and the majority of those printed voted against Dog's character. Well, I don't want to defend this stereotype, but I have to say that all cartoon characters are stereotypes in one way or another. Would anyone like to argue that Cathy isn't a stereotype with her endless weight and shopping gags? That Duke isn't a stereotype of a dope-smoking gonzo journalist manqué? That Blondie isn't--choke!--a stereotypical bourgeois housewife-cum-caterer? No one seems to get upset when white middle-class businessmen are typed and deflated in endless **New Yorker** gags, but when any cartoonist ventures to include Asian or African people in a gag, here come the appallettes. The secret of getting your letter published in our local PC papers is to use the phrase *I was appalled by* and keep the gripe as short as an editor's attention span. Complaints about racial stereotyping never have the result the complainers think they will have. In the thirties and forties, there were black characters in cartoons, but after WW2, complaints from the NAACP reached the animation industry. What happened? Bob Clampett's **COAL BLACK AND DE SEBBEN DWARFS** and **TIN PAN ALLEY CATS** went out of circulation and black characters vanished from cartoons. Well, success! There were no more negative stereotypes, but there were no more blacks included in the cartoon world

## MEGA-DADA ON HAIGHT STREET

Painter **Guy Colwell** has announced that he will destroy one of his paintings on the sidewalk in front of The Wasteland at 1660 Haight Street. This act of anarchic anti-art will take place May 1, 1993, at 1 pm. Colwell will saw his 60 x 72" painting, **RACE STREET**, into numerous small pieces. Whether this is an act of destruction, affirmation, negation, or liberation will depend upon the eye of the beholder. I suspect this deformation art will be well attended. It is not without precedent. I recall reading about a show which took place during the period of early Dada wherein axes were passed out to all those attending and the art happily destroyed during the evening. Back in 1970, Cliff Humphries, founder of Ecology Action, drove his car into Provo Park across from City Hall in Berkeley and proceeded to pass out tools to anyone who wished to help with its destruction. A couple of hundred people smashed and pounded Cliff's old Chevy into a pile of useless metal. It was quite liberating watching someone else's car obliterated. Afterwards, we all got into our own cars and drove home. Is Colwell liberating himself from the weight of all that art? Will he be arrested for art abuse?

**WEIRD CITY 5** is \$2 from Dave Szurek, 1206 Wheeler, # 2, Hoquiam, WA 98550-1901. Dave likes to trade and rap and he's into horror films.

either. Some people argued in the exchange of letters about Dog's gags that there are ways Asian people can be caricatured that will not be seen as negative; come on! No matter how a cartoonist draws Asian or black people, those who want to see the drawing as a negative stereotype are going to see it that way. The slant of Asian eyes is used as shorthand by a cartoonist who wants to suggest an Asian character and it's neither positive or negative. Those who have residual memories of WW2 propaganda posters which featured Japanese people with buck teeth and slanted eyes are unlikely to accept any cartoonist's depiction of a Japanese character. The cartoonist who dares to caricature actors like Yaphet Kotto or Danny Glover is going to be called a racist. When a black cartoonist, Grass Green, drew a story about a character he called Reverend Jackman, he was criticized by black people for degrading his race. Who knows what these folks had to say to the young black artist who sent me a copy of **SAMBO SPADE, PRIVATE EYE**, a few years back.

Well, cartoonists are funny folks. Some react to attacks upon their PCness with timidity and stop drawing anything that offends. Others counterattack with outrageous images like Robert Crumb's Angelfood McSpade. I think comics reflect the real world and that world has racism, sexism, agism, capitalism, communism, & umpteem other isms and ologies in it. One cartoonist makes the president look like Moses coming down off the mountain while another makes him look like a grinning Howdy Doody. Show me a politically-correct cartoonist and I'll show you someone who has tossed out his bristol board. C.G.

## Comix Plugola

**RABBITBOY 3** is \$1 from Bruce Stengl, 633 King St., Apt. 13, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. DZ.

## Skinboy Lives.

The latest adventures of **Skinboy** plus a few old adventures retold come from **Starhead Comix**. Write for a catalog and prices. POB 30044, Seattle, WA. **Jim Williams** was at Wonder Con hanging out with **Dog boy Lafler** and friends. Fantagraphics will do a book of Jim's work this summer.

Dave Stevens' newest erotic sculpture is only \$200 bucks. Write to **Dark Horse Comics**, Dept. M-393, 10956 S. E. Main St., Milwaukie, OR 97222 for information.

**Gary Usher** has some nice reprint zines and some of his own work and is interested in trading with other newavers. His recent titles include: **THE ART OF H. C. GREENING, HARRY WOODS, DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE, and PREMATURE ANTI-FASCIST**. Write to Gary at 205 N. Vine St., Glenwood, IA 51534. He is currently working on an index of **CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY**, done by Artie Romero in Colorado in the early 1980s.